

Vicissitudes

by Emmal

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Summary: Every day we face vicissitudes - favourable or unfavourable events or situations that occur by chance.

Vicissitudes

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Title: Vicissitudes

> Author: Rat & Emma Woods
 Date: 5th March 2000

> Category: JackRachel romance

>
 Summary: Life is a challenge. Every day we face vicissitudes - favourable or unfavourable events or situations that occur by chance.

>
 Disclaimer: Yes Jack & Rachel and all the others that you recognise belong to the guy who owns me too - Hal McElroy. He's really quite nice. And our adorable little Rat belongs to Jules, who so kindly lets us use him.

>
 Author's Notes: Well Helen wrote another fic, so I decided to write another one! Yeah we kinda got blasted by Rachel when she found out we'd been using her email addy. We promptly got our own, it actually wasn't that hard.

> Oh and in case you're wondering about the title, well it's a word that my Legal Studies teacher loved to use when I was back at school.
 And please send feedback, coz I just love the stuff!

>
 Dedication: I'd like to dedicate this to Gavin, coz he's so old now. And coz he helped me a bit with information about alcohol. And of course all my fics are dedicated to all the other people at the Sydney Water Police!

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> Vicissitudes
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>
 Rachel ran through the front doors, only five minutes late.

>
 About another five minutes later, Jack ran through looking slightly dishevelled and disorganised.

>
 Helen shook her head. Those two were hopeless. Really

hopeless.

>
 Jack walked into the office to find Rachel playing with little Rat. She hadn't noticed him come in, and she looked so relaxed and happy. She looked up and saw him there, and suddenly it was like a wall had gone up. She still played with Rat in her lap, but she no longer looked relaxed.

>
 She smiled at Jack, but he knew that smile - it wasn't a real one.

>
 They had the office to themselves as Mick was at the courts all day, so Jack decided to have it out with Rachel straight away.

>
 "So why'd you leave without me?" he said.

>
 "I had to get to work," she replied.

>
 "Yeah and so did I!" said Jack, "had you noticed we work at the same place?"

>
 "I didn't want to be late," Rachel said simply.

>
 "Oh come on Rach, what happened this morning? What'd I do?" asked Jack.

>
 "Who said you did anything?" Rachel said innocently.

>
 "Don't play games with me," Jack said tiredly, "I mean last night was good. It was really good. And don't tell me you didn't enjoy it, coz I was there. And I don't mean to sound conceited, but I saw that look of extreme pleasure on your face. You wanted me so badly, just like I wanted you. And it was perfect, it was so right. So what happened?"

>
 "Jack, I really don't feel like discussing this right now," Rachel said, her turn to sound tired.

>
 Rachel played with Rat's ears, and the little cat looked up at his mummy.

>
 'Why is my mummy so sad and angry today?' Rat miaowed quietly.

>
 Rachel smiled down at her favourite little cat, and took a deep breath whilst trying to listen to what Jack was saying.

>
 "Well when then?" demanded Jack. "You can't just keep brushing me off, pushing me away. I deserve answers. I mean you just suddenly ran off without any explanation. It wasn't exactly the reaction I was hoping for, after what I said."

>
 "Yeah well I'm sorry if I didn't live up to your reaction standards," Rachel said sarcastically.

>
 "Oh shit Rachel, don't be stupid," said Jack, beginning to get annoyed. "I just want to know why you walked away. Was it what I said?"

>
 "Jack, I just need time to think," replied Rachel. "Give me some space."

>
 "Fine," he muttered as he walked out of the room. "I'm going to talk to someone about a stolen boat."

>
 * * * * *

>
 Rachel groaned as Helen handed the piece of paper over. "Can't Mick do it?" she complained.

>
 "No," said Helen, "remember - he's in court today."

>
 "Oh yeah dammit," said Rachel. "Well what about Jack? He's already out there, can't he do it?"

>
 "You can pick him up on the way," replied Helen, "look it'll take you five minutes. It's just another stolen boat - nothing suspicious."

>
 "Oh Michael, Michael, Michael," grumbled Rachel as she reluctantly got up from her desk.

>
 As she stood up she lifted a purring Rat off her lap. The cat stirred and looked at Rachel sleepily.

>
 'Where are you going mummy? Can I come too?'

>
 But as he felt himself being lowered into his basket, he did a little kitty yawn and then promptly fell back asleep. Rachel smiled at her gorgeous little cat as she quietly walked out of the room.

>
 As she began to walk down the stairs, Rachel heard Tommy and Gavin on their way up.

>
 "See it's just like this hard-boiled egg," said Gavin.

>
 "Riiight," said Tommy, realising that this was another one of Gavin's crazy ideas.

>
 "It is!" protested Gavin, realising that Tommy didn't believe him. "See" Gavin was so intent on the egg, that he misjudged the steps and fell forward.

>
 Rachel saw him begin to fall, and debated whether to catch him or to let him stumble embarrassingly. Letting him fall seemed a much better idea, but she didn't have enough time to jump out of the way.

>
 Gavin fell and grabbed at the nearest things to support him. He almost pushed Rachel over in the process, but luckily she kept her balance. In the whole fall, the hard-boiled egg and Rachel's clothes came off the worst. The egg had been in Gavin's hand, and Gavin had fallen on Rachel.

>
 She looked down at her shirt. Her front was covered in bits of shell, blobs of egg-whit, and egg-yolk running down her chest.

>
 "I thought you said it was a hard-boiled egg," said Rachel through gritted teeth as she glared at Gavin.

>
 "Yeah, well.." Gavin grinned sheepishly. "Obviously I didn't cook it long enough."

>
 "Obviously!" said Tommy, trying not to laugh at the scene before him.

>
 "Look I'm sorry Rachel," said Gavin.

>
 "Don't worry about it Gavin - you can pay for my dry-cleaning," Rachel said sweetly.

>
 She continued down the stairs and went to her locker to find a spare set of clothes. After getting changed she took her egg-covered suit and shirt to Gavin and told him she wanted to wear them tomorrow.

>
 "Sure," said Gavin lightly - reminding himself never to get on the wrong side of Rachel again.

>
 * * * * *

>
 Gavin rushed to the dry-cleaners as soon as he could. A young woman sat behind the counter reading "Dolly" magazine. Her name badge said Doreen and she looked completely bored.

>
 Gavin dumped Rachel's suit and shirt on the counter, and then coughed subtly when the girl didn't respond.

>
 She looked up, "Yeah?"

>
 "Um, I want some things cleaned?" said Gavin, afraid that he might be stating the obvious.

>
 "Oh okay," replied Doreen as though someone wanting their clothes cleaned at the dry-cleaners was a completely new concept. She took the items and looked at them. "Ooooh your girlfriend have a bit of an accident with an egg, 'ey?"

>
 "Ah yeah," said Gavin - not bothering to try and explain that the owner of the clothes was not his girlfriend.

>
 "Yeah well it's nasty," said Doreen. "This lot'll be um twenty bucks."

>
 "Okay," replied Gavin, "ah when can I pick them up?"

>
 "Oh I reckon tomorrow sometime probably," she said.

>
 "Ah I was hoping sometime sooner, like this afternoon?" Gavin said with a charming smile.

>
 The charm was lost on the shop-assistant. "Oooh, I d'no," she

said. "If you want it done by this arvo you'll hafta pay extra."

>
 "Fine," replied Gavin. "How much?"

>
 "Oh I reckon um about another \$20?" said Doreen.

>
 "Great, can I pay now?" said Gavin, handing over \$40. "I'll be back this afternoon."

>
 "Yeah, byeee!" said Doreen. Gavin hurried out of the shop, trying to get away from that nasal tone.

>
 Doreen went back to her Dolly whilst absent-mindedly going through the pockets of Rachel's suit. She found two small safety pins in the left pocket of the jacket, a Polly Waffle wrapper in the right pocket, and in the inside pocket there was a \$10 note, missing a small piece of one corner.

>
 Doreen casually looked around the shop, and as no one was in sight she transferred the \$10 note into her own pocket.

>
 * * * * *

>
 "So where are we going?" yelled Tommy as the Nemesis pulled away from the pier in the early afternoon.

>
 "Ah, we've gotta go pick up Jack from wherever you dropped him before," answered Rachel. "And then we've just gotta check out this stolen boat."

>
 "Another one?" said Gavin.

>
 "Yeah, seems like we've got a boat-stealing epidemic on our hands," Rachel said, enthusiasm not noticeable in her voice.

>
 They picked up Jack and then went to talk to the owner of the most recently stolen boat. Five cruisers had been stolen in the past two days, and not a trace of them had been found. The boat crew had been looking out for them, and doing regular checks of all the marinas, but there was nothing.

>
 The latest boat was the same. The cruiser had been cut from its mooring with a serrated-edged object. It had been moored right outside the owner's waterfront house, and had been stolen in broad daylight. The only connection they had found so far was that each boat owner had used the same gardening service at sometime in the past year. And it was the same with this latest stolen cruiser, the same gardening company. But it didn't help the detectives much, because the boats were still missing. Vanished without a trace.

>

> "I reckon he's sus," said Gavin as they drove away from the latest victim.

> "What?" said Rachel.

> "Well he's suspicious, don't you think?" Gavin continued, "there's just something about him that tells me he's up to something."

> Jack, Rachel and Tommy all looked at Gavin sceptically. He noticed their looks and when they didn't say anything he kept going. "Okay I just get this feeling that this one's not that same as the others. I reckon if you look him up on COPS you'll find he doesn't even own a cruiser. Either that or he owns ten cruisers. It's an insurance scam!"

> "Sykesie," began Jack, "how is owning ten cruisers an insurance scam?"

> "Well he has them all insured with a different company, right?" said Gavin, "so the boats get stolen, and he claims them all, because none of the companies know what he's doing."

> "You need to get out more Gavin," said Rachel.

> "No seriously, it's nothing to do with those other thefts, it's insurance," insisted Gavin.

> "You've been watching too many cop shows Sykesie," laughed Tommy.

> "Didn't you guys feel it?" asked Gavin. "There was something about

that guy. I bet he's been inside. I could just feel that he was up to something."

> "And too many sci-fi and fantasy shows," said Tommy, still laughing.

> "Okay, so how much do you bet?" asked Jack.

> "What?" said Gavin.

> "Well you just said you bet he's done time," said Jack. "And you reckon this is all unconnected to the other cases"

> "Even though the circumstances, the evidence - everything," said Rachel, taking over from Jack. "Everything is exactly the same as all the other cases, even down to the gardening company, and you still think it's unconnected?"

> "Yeah I do!" replied Gavin.

> "Well put your money where your mouth is then," said Jack.

> Gavin looked at him, not understanding what he was saying.

> "You bet this is unconnected, you bet he's a known crim," said Jack. "So now how much do ya bet? An we'll go back and get Helen to check it on COPS."

> "Okay ten bucks says he's been inside and this is unconnected to the other boat thefts," Gavin said.

> "Ten bucks?" laughed Jack. "You're not very sure of yourself."

> "Hey I don' have a sergeants salary, Jack," retaliated Gavin.

> * * * * *

> Doreen wandered into the mini-supermarket opposite the dry-cleaners. She picked up a couple of Mars Bars, a bottle of coke, a few packets of chips and a bag of jelly babies. She didn't often get a chance to splurge like this - only when customers left money in their clothes. She pulled the \$10 note with a torn corner out of her pocket and handed it over to Sharon - the supermarket checkout-chick - as they had their daily gossip fest.

> * * * * *

> Rachel walked into Helen's office, closely followed by Jack and Gavin, with Tommy waiting at the door.

> "What is this?" said Helen.

> "Ah nothing," replied Rachel. "We just need you to check something on COPS for us. And Gavin's um got a theory, so he's interested in the information."

> "And Tommy?" asked Helen.

> "Well I s'pose he's waiting for Gav," Rachel said sweetly.

> "Fine," said Helen, rolling her eyes. "What do you need?"

> "Ah we just need a check on a George Reid," said Rachel. "Um we need any priors, as well as what boats he owns?"

> "Right, coming up," said Helen. "Okay George Reid no priors not even an outstanding parking fine and boats.. he has one cruiser, reported missing this morning - which I presume you've looked in to?"

> "Yeah. Thanks Helen," said Rachel as they all filed out of the room.

> "Do you ever get that sinking feeling?" said Gavin.

> "That'll be \$10 Sykesie," grinned Jack.

> "Hey that was only half the bet," replied Gavin. "You've still gotta prove that this is connected to all the other boat thefts."

> "Sinking feeling" said Rachel. The others looked at her, confused, as she dashed back to Helen's office. "Helen, where are Dave and Woodsie?"

> "Ah, in the diver's area I think," replied Helen.

> "Can we take then for a while?" asked Rachel.

> "Yeah, I suppose. What" began Helen.

> "Thanks!" yelled Rachel as she dashed back out.

> "Come on," Jack said to Tommy and Gavin. "Looks like we might just be solving that other half of the bet."

> * * * * *

> The detectives were in the Nemesis, back outside George Reid's house. They sat watching the divers on Harpy, and Rachel finally explained her theory to Jack and the boat crew.

> "We've been looking at this presuming someone has taken the boats to either use or sell," said Rachel. "But what if the whole motive has nothing to do with the cruisers?"

> Jack still looked confused.

> "Well maybe these people are just trying to annoy or upset the boat owners," Rachel added. "And no one has seen or heard the boats being taken away, so"

> "Sinking feeling!" said Jack, finally understanding.

> Gavin still wasn't sure what was going on, but he didn't like to ask.

> "Anything Dave?" Rachel yelled across the water.

> Dave spoke into his radio, "What've you got for us Woodsie?"

> "Yeah, we've just got right down," came Emma's voice back over the radio. "Yep there's a cruiser down here all right."

> Dave nodded back across the water to the Nemesis. "Bingo!" he yelled.

> Rachel smiled sweetly at Jack.

> "Okay, you were right," said Jack.

> Emma could be heard over the radio again, "Yeah it looks like it's been punctured and slashed repeatedly. Bit of a write-off I reckon."

> "Okay," said Dave. "Just leave it, it's not going anywhere. Get back up - we've got five other sites to check out."

> "Thanks Dave," yelled Rachel, "we'll see ya later!" They waved goodbye as the Nemesis sped off.

> * * * * *

> It was late afternoon when they arrived back at the station. Gavin promptly went off to pick up Rachel's dry-cleaning.

> Rachel walked into her office and was greeted by a now very wide awake Rat.

> "Hello gorgeous!" she gushed over the cat. "Did you have a nice sleepy day?"

> Rachel sat down to do some work and Rat purred contentedly in her lap. Jack looked across at the duo enviously. He and Rachel had been quite friendly to each other all day, but it wasn't quite the same. She was keeping her distance, and she wouldn't tell him what was bothering her.

> * * * * *

> Gavin made a quick stop at the ATM on his way to the dry-cleaners. He walked in and Doreen was eating jelly babies and still reading Dolly.

> "Hiii!" she said cheerily, looking up from her magazine.

> "Hi," said Gavin. He waited a few moments, but Doreen seemed to have gone back to reading. "Um, can I pick up my cleaning?"

> "Oh! You wanna pick it up do ya?" Doreen asked, surprised.

> "Yeah. You said it would be ready," said Gavin.

> "Yeah it is. I'll just get it for ya!" replied Doreen.

> Gavin finally got Rachel's clothes back and hurried out of the shop. He decided an extra peace-offering wouldn't go astray, so he

made a quick stop at the mini-supermarket across the road.

> As he walked around trying to find the cat food aisle, he could feel the girl at the checkout watching him. He chose a few packets of Dine and quickly went to the checkout.

> "Hi! I'm Sharon!" said the girl, with an added giggle.

> "Hi," replied Gavin, wishing to get out of there as soon as possible.

> "I love cats!" she said as she put the packets of food through.

> "I can't really stand the things myself," Gavin said sweetly.

> "Oh well you know, I don't always love 'em," Sharon said suddenly. "Sometimes I can't stand them either!"

> "Really," said Gavin as he handed over the money.

> Sharon smiled a huge grin at Gavin as she fumbled to get his change. She blushed as she handed it over. "Maybe I'll see you again?" she said hopefully.

> "Maybe," replied Gavin, hoping the exact opposite. He noticed a small tear in the corner of the \$10 note Sharon had given him, as he put it into his wallet.

> * * * * *

> There was an awkward silence in the D's office when Gavin walked in. Little did he know it had been like that all day.

> "Ah Rachel?" Gavin said tentatively, "I've got your suit."

> Rachel looked up, "Oh wow - I didn't think you'd be able to find someone who did same-day dry-cleaning."

> "Neither did I," admitted Gavin. "And I'm not too sure about the quality of the cleaning, but I think most traces of egg are gone."

> "Thanks Gavin," said Rachel.

> "And I bought a gift for Rat," added Gavin, as he produced the packets of Dine.

> "Oh thanks!" she said, smiling a real smile at him. "Rat, baby!" she called, and the cat came running from a corner of the room. "Look what Uncle Gav brought you!"

> Rat miaowed cutely towards Gavin, but he just backed away.

> "Still not a cat lover?" asked Rachel.

> "Not really," he replied as he turned to Jack. "Here's your \$10 Jack, I guess my instincts were wrong."

> "Yeah way off there Sykesie," Jack laughed. "Hey! This ten bucks has a corner missing!"

> "Ah it's still legal tender Jack," replied Gavin. "I'll see you guys later. Hey, it's late - don't you ever go home?"

> "Ahhh, the life of a detective Gav," said Rachel.

> "So as a detective you have no private or social life huh? Maybe it's not such a good idea," said Gavin as he walked out the door.

> Rachel glanced at Jack, but quickly averted her eyes because he was looking meaningfully at her. They worked in silence again for a while until Jack announced he was going home.

> "See ya," he said deliberately, pausing before going out the door.

> "Yeah bye," said Rachel without looking up from her desk.

> * * * * *

> On his way home Jack stopped at the bottle shop close to his house. He was feeling quite melancholy and decided it must be time to drown his sorrows. He looked at the beer but beer reminded him too much of Rachel. He moved on to the harder stuff, and ran his eyes over the whisky shelves. Wild Turkey - not real whisky, he thought. Glenfyddich - nah he wasn't that rich. He went for the good old

Johnnie Walker, he reached for a bottle of Red Label. But then he thought hell - he'd just won ten bucks, and if he was going to drown his sorrows he may as well do it with good whisky. He took a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label to the counter.

> He had to basically empty his wallet, including the slightly damaged \$10 note, but he was so dispirited that he didn't really care.

> * * * * *

> Rachel sighed as she switched off her computer. She wasn't really very happy herself. She noticed that Helen's light was still on and she thought she'd go have a quick chat.

> She walked into Helen's office and plonked herself down on the comfy chairs.

> "You still here?" asked Helen, putting down her pen.

> "Yeah well I had some paperwork to do, and it's not like there's any special reason to go home," said Rachel.

> "What about Jack?" said Helen.

> "Oh he went home about half an hour ago," replied Rachel.

> "No," said Helen, "I meant isn't he a reason for you to go home?"

> "Oh Helen look, there's nothing" Rachel began defensively.

> "I'm not accusing you of anything," said Helen, "it's just a question, as a friend. Isn't Jack a good reason for you to go home?"

> "I d'no," Rachel said truthfully. "I guess that's what I came to talk to you about. I just don't know what's going on with me. I walked out on him this morning."

> "Well why'd you walk out on him?" Helen asked.

> "Oh he said something, and I I guess I just freaked," sighed Rachel.

> "What'd he say?" asked Helen - wanting to help her friend, but also secretly wanting to know the goss.

> "Well he said" began Rachel, "Helen if any of this gets out, I swear"

> "Rachel this is me you're talking to."

> "Yeah I know, sorry. Anyway," Rachel continued, "I woke up next to him - again! And it didn't seem so weird, it's starting to become a nice habit. God I still try to think of this as a one-night stand."

> "I think it's gone beyond that," said Helen.

> "Yeah I know," groaned Rachel. "I just don't know where I want it to go. But we woke up together and he looked at me and said 'I want to wake up next to you every day for the rest of my life'. And I just freaked."

> "Sounds like he's pretty serious," said Helen.

> "Yeah, it surprised me, it doesn't seem like Jack, but he was totally in earnest. But I d'no - commitment - I just don't think I can handle it again. But what scared me even more was that I felt all warm and fuzzy inside when he said that."

> "And it sounds like you're pretty serious too," added Helen, "even if you won't admit it."

> "What am I gonna do Helen?"

> "Just go with it Rachel," advised Helen. "You don't want to admit it, but I've seen it. You've been so happy these past months. But take things at your own pace. If you're not ready for the big 'c' word then Jack will understand. Just don't cut him off."

> Rachel looked wide-eyed at Helen. "Is this the same woman that previously always told me 'cops and cops don't mix'?"

> "I still think that," said Helen. "But you're my friend, and I've seen you go through a lot of not-so-good relationships. And you're

happy now, so I think you should stick with it."

> "Yeah I think I should too," grinned Rachel. "Thanks Helen!"

> "Oh what for?" scoffed Helen.

> "For being here for me," Rachel replied simply. "You put up with a lot from me."

> "Yeah I do!" said Helen. "Don't worry, I'll come running to you when I want relationship advice. Now scat! Go home!"

> "See ya!" said Rachel, a lot more cheerful than she had been before.

> * * * * *

> Rachel pulled into the bottle shop, beginning to feel nervous, trying to work out what she would say.

> She looked over the bottles of wine, but decided that she really only liked wine with food. She looked at the whisky, knowing that Jack liked it, but she really wasn't sure which sort to buy. Eventually she turned to the good old beer, which was always a winner. She picked up a six-pack, deciding that they didn't want to get too intoxicated tonight. This was all as long as Jack let her in his door.

> She took the beer to the counter and paid for it, hardly even realising she was doing it. She handed over a \$50 note and received back an interesting combination of change, including a ten dollar note with a small rip in one corner. She remembered having one like that before, it had been in her jacket pocket and she couldn't remember spending it. She'd have to ask Gavin about it.

> * * * * *

> Rachel pulled up outside Jack's house. She sat in the car for a few minutes, getting more and more nervous about what she would say to Jack. She couldn't understand why she was so worried, but she'd managed to convince herself that Jack would never want to see her again. She had been a bit of a bitch.

> She took a deep breath and got out of the car, with the beer. She knocked timidly on the door. She heard no response, but she could see a light on somewhere in the house. She knocked again, more forcefully. Eventually she heard Jack coming to the door.

> He opened the door with a bottle of whisky in his hand and a scowl on his face. His expression softened when he saw Rachel standing there.

> She smiled at him - a real smile. "Can I come in?"

> Jack stood looking at her for what seemed like hours. Rachel suddenly feared that he would shut the door in her face.

> But he smiled back. "Yeah, you can come in."

>

>
 * * * * *
> Ende!!

>
 Hit the reply button!!
> All feedback goes to emma.woods@freemail.com.au
 Thanks
> <p>

End
file.